

Notes and gleanings

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And I am quite sure that our old friend Tartarin would still think, when one of those food-parcels hit him on the head, as he was sitting in a crevasse, that the whole thing had been engineered by the Society of Hotel-Keepers for his and other tourists' benefit!

Freight Transport by Air and Rail

"Aeroplane," Dec. 4th.

Arrangements have been made between Imperial Airways and the railway companies for a combined rail and air goods service. Freight may be sent to the Continent from over 100 provincial towns. The goods will travel by train to Croydon whence they will be flown to the Continent. (Where they will doubtless be mis-handled by the French railways for months, though in Germany and Switzerland and Holland they will be handled efficiently.—Ed.)

S'nice that little bit put in by the Editor, isn't it?

Winter in an Alpine Valley.

The Spectator, 30th Nov.

... The sun, we know, will be a spike of gold in the flawless turquoise of the sky and we shall remember how St. Francis praised God for "lo frate sole" seven hundred years ago. Nowhere is our brother the sun so essential and so appreciated as here in these Alpine valleys in winter. Life, indeed, and the low temperatures would be insupportable without him; yet I have never seen or heard a ski-runner stop to chant a canticle to his praise. A reticent, inarticulate race, which keeps its "landes" unsung and hidden in the heart.

The coming of winter in our Alpine valley is full of wonder and delight. Just before the first serious fall of snow the valley will be filled with a curious opaque blue; the pine woods on the mountain sides turn to the darkest indigo. An indescribable stillness settles down on the valley; snow flakes will fall silently and sparsely. Then as the big snow clouds gather and fill the valley snow falls thickly and heavily, perhaps for days. But one morning we shall wake to find the clouds have dispersed and formed into moulded domes, or clung along the mountain sides. First one dazzling white peak, then another, will emerge through the clouds till soon the whole valley will lie white and glittering in the sunshine beneath the bluest of skies.

With the first fall of snow will come the first wave of winter sportsmen and women, swelling to a flood of visitors at Christmas, when the annual exodus to the Alps takes place.

How firmly winter sports (and especially ski-running) have become a permanent part of European winter recreation may be judged from a perusal of the 374 interesting pages of this year's British Ski Book, the official publication of the British Ski Club.

The ski has conquered everywhere and everyone. In the early days of winter sport, which the writer remembers well, we were confined to rink and track. The ski has altered all that. It has liberated us. It has opened up the whole winter world of the high Alps. A skier is lord of all he surveys: he can go where he will, if he be proficient. Further, the ski has brought about the development of winter mountaineering. The state of mountains in winter above the normal snow line is much the same as in summer; the weather is often just as good and reliable. The ski, by getting the climber over the lower slopes, often ways deep in snow, has enabled him to ascend the majority of the high peaks in winter, not, of course, on ski but with the help of ski. The ski has brought the sportsman and woman into close and intimate association with the high Alps in winter. No wonder this fine sport, calling forth skill and courage, has captured modern youth, and not only youth, for you may enjoy your skis long after that delectable age has passed away with *les neiges d'antan*.

A matter which is closely bound up with international activities is mentioned in *The Times* of 30th Nov., namely:

Abolition of Trade Restrictions

The German Government has ratified the Convention for the Abolition of Export and Import Prohibitions and Trade Restrictions as well as subsequent agreements drawn up at Geneva in connexion with this subject.

In presenting the instrument of ratification to the Secretariat of the League the German representative declared that Germany's consent was conditional upon the ratification of these conventions by Austria, the United States, France, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Poland, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Switzerland, and Czechoslovakia.

The condition which Germany puts on her consent is natural and shows once more how difficult these international matters are and how patient one has to be. It's no use blaming the League of Nations for the slow progress made in many cases, it's much better to praise its work for the things that have been done, remembering all the time the extraordinary, almost superhuman, efforts that have gone to make a success of anything. It's the same with the war-spirit. I was pleased to see, shewn on the screen during an interval of a performance at the Repertory Theatre at Southend-on-Sea, an advertisement by a Peace Society, in which the public was asked to talk peace, think peace, act peace, etc. That

is what I call the proper way, the proper suggestion. And those croakers who, for lack of energy to think matters out to a conclusion, end up by saying resignedly and hoping they won't anyhow be in it "what's the use, there will anyhow be a war again sooner or later" ought to be locked up for corrupting the minds of others.

Personal:

I was proud to read in last week's *Observer*, of my quint-essential respectability and very nearly convinced H.W.K.M.B. (Her who knows me best) of it too. Very nearly, I say, but thanks all the same to "ek."

PRO JUVENTUTE STAMPS.

Abandoning the former somewhat stereotyped series of escutcheons of the Cantons which have characterised the Christmas charity stamps of Switzerland since 1918, the annual issue on behalf of the national institution "Pro Juventute," will present this year picturesque views of lake and mountain scenery as regards the three lowest denominations, while that of 30 centimes is dedicated to the great Swiss pacifist, Nickolaus von Flue (1417-1487), who was instrumental in uniting the Confederacy after the Burgundian wars.

These stamps have been off-set printed by the famous firm of J. Enschede and Sons at Haarlem after the designs of eminent artists and comprise: 5 centimes violet and rose, Lake Lugano (after the painter, Gos. of Geneva), 10c. olive-green, brown and bluish, view of Engstlensee, and Mount Titlis (by Ed. Boss, of Bern), 20c. red and blue, view of Lyskamm and Ryffelberg (by the same artist), and 30c. blue on azure, head of Nickolaus von Flue (after Ant. Stockmann, of Sarnen).

They were issued on Sunday (December 1), and will remain current for one month only, the proceeds of their sale being devoted to the protection of children of school age.

We are giving herewith a few figures of what has been done in 17 years: Since 1912 Frs. 5,100,000 have been paid in 182 districts: Frs. 810,000 for mothers, infants and children; Frs. 832,000 for school-children; Frs. 683,000 for young people having left school; Frs. 913,000 for citizens of all ages; Frs. 511,000 in aid of the campaign against tuberculosis; Frs. 70,000 campaign against the mis-use of alcohol; Frs. 110,000 provision for abnormals, and Frs. 1,100,000 for cases of need which were attended to by cantonal and communal authorities.

Through the Central secretariat: Frs. 450,000 (½-Ct. per stamp) for the Benevolent Fund of employees in the service of the Post Office; Frs. 3,100,000 for Holiday-homes for school children; Frs. 250,000 for needy school children during the war; Frs. 146,000 for young people having left school; Frs. 72,000 Organisation for the welfare of young people; Frs. 100,000 for children under school-age; Frs. 535,000 Propaganda, Information, etc.; Frs. 513,000 for the purpose of practical instruction for helpers of the scheme.

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